(c) if not, the other steps being planned to help the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) The necessary information is being obtained and shall be laid on the Table of the House.

(b) At present there is no such proposal under consideration of the Government.

(c) Government is implementing a number of schemes for devebpment of the agriculture sector and improving the condition of farmers. The strategies formulated, *inter alia,* include (i) enhancing institutional credit flow to the farmers and strengthening of cooperative credit structure; (ii) ensuring the timely availability of quality inputs: (iii) promoting farmer friendly, demand driven agriculture extension system; (iv) accelerating diversification to high value crops including horticulture activities; (v) strengthening infrastructure and the supply chain; (vi) optimizing the efficient utilization of available water resources through micro irrigation and enhancing the sustainability of dry-land/rain fed farming system; (vii) reforming agricultural markets, and widespread use of post harvest technology; and (viii) putting in place a broader spectrum of risk management apparatus for farmers. The focus of agriculture credit policy is on progressive institutionalization for providing timely and adequate credit support to farmers with particular focus on small and marginal farmers to enable them to adopt modem technology and improved agricultural practices for increasing agricultural production and productivity.

Supply of fertilizers and pesticides to small/marginal farmers

2268. SHRI T. T. V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that insufficient application of fertilizers and pesticides by farmers result in low yield, affecting agricultural output;

(b) the estimated loss of production on account of this; and

(c) the steps taken to provide adequate fertilizers and pesticides to farmers particularly to small/marginal farmers to increase production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

(SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Fertiliser is made available to the farmers as per assessment done before each Kharif and Rabi seasons by the Government in consultation with the State Governments and fertilizers manufactures/importers. Balanced and judicious application of fertilizers and pesticides help in increasing agriculture production and controlling pest population from damaging crops. No estimates of loss in production on account of lesser application of fertilizers and pesticides are available.

(c) There is a widespread network of dealers/primary agricultural cooperative societies numbering about 2.89 lakh in the country to make fertilizers available to the farmers (including small/marginal farmers) across the country in required quantities at maximum retail prices which are significantly lower than the cost of production of fertilizer. Measures for plant protection under taken by the Government include monitoring of pest/disease situation in all States, production, conservation and release of bio- control agents, training farmers and extension officers of the State Agriculture Department in Integrated Pest Management through Farmers Field Schools (FFSs), providing subsides @25% upto Rs.500/ hectare and Rs.250/ hectare for application of bio-pesticides and chemical pesticides to small and marginal farmers.

Change in guidlines for relief to drought Hit States

†2269. DR. PRABHA THAKUR:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased the state:

(a) whether Central Government have made changes in the existing guidlines to provide relief to drought hit States in order to give them lump-sum waiving for one year on payment of interest on loan for Kharif crops, to increase the ceiling of agriculture investment subsidy and to provide additional assistance to these States;

(b) if so, the completed details of new guidelines issue by Centre; and

(c) the extensive details of released/proposed to be released assistance schemes and loan schemes by Central Government for drought hit States especially, for the farmers of Rajasthan, till date?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.